

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, notice is hereby given for the following meeting of the:

***Arlington School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, April 5, 2016
5:30 PM***

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Subcommittee Meeting

*Arlington High School
School Committee Room
869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6th Floor
Arlington, MA 02476*

Approval of draft March 31, 2016 minutes

Public Participation

Review comparison chart information completed thus far

Complete comparison of OMS expansion v. relocation to Gibbs

Date for next meeting, if necessary

New Business

Adjournment

The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Stated times and time amounts, listed in parenthesis, are the estimated amount of time for that particular agenda item. Actual times may be shorter or longer depending on the time needed to fully explore the topic.

Submitted by Jeff Thielman, Chair



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Approval of draft March 31, 2016 minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

| Type | File Name | Description |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▢ Minutes | CIAA_Minutes_3.31.16_DRAFT_(1).docx | CIAA Draft Minutes 3 31 2016 |

Arlington School Committee
Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 31, 2016 @ 6:00 p.m.

Attendance

Subcommittee Members: Jeff Thielman (Chair), Judson Pierce, Cindy Starks

School Committee Members: Paul Schlichtman, Bill Hayner

District Leadership: Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D. (Superintendent), Laura Chesson, Ed.D. (Assistant Superintendent), Rob Spiegel (Human Resources Director), Linda Hanson (AEA President), Jack Flood (Assistant Principal, Ottoson Middle School), Maureen Murphy (Assistant Principal, Ottoson Middle School)

Middle School Teachers: Judith Packer (8th Grade), Polly Foro (teacher and parent), Alecia Serafini (Art Teacher and parent), David Schaye (Special Education Teacher and parent)

Community Members: Jennifer Lockland, Tinur Yontar, Lauren Ledger, Jennifer Litowski, Molly Lyons, Brendan Sullivan, Jen Davidson

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. The minutes of the January 14, 2016 meeting were approved, 3-0 Motion by Mr. Pierce, Second by Ms. Starks.
2. Jeff Thielman provided context for today's discussion. The School Department has to answer two questions:
 - a. The School Enrollment Task Force has asked for a report by Thursday, April 28th answering the question of what is the best educational option – expanding the current Ottoson Middle School or relocating middle school students to Gibbs?
 - b. If the Gibbs is the preferred option, what is the best configuration for that school? The choices are all 6th grade students at the Gibbs v. a 6th, 7th, and 8th grade school that would draw from students from East Arlington.
3. Mr. Thielman explained that he and Dr. Bodie collaborated on an excel chart that listed various factors to consider to help answer the two questions raised above. A chart summarizing the discussion is attached in a separate document. Below is a summary of the main points made by the meeting participants:
 - a. To best assess transportation impact, we need to ask the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) for an analysis of traffic impact if the district relocates middle school

students to Gibbs. It seemed clear to the group that traffic would increase with an all 6th grade model.

- b. Ottoson Assistant Principal Jack Flood presented the results of teacher focus groups and individual teacher surveys:
 - i. Majority of respondents were to renovate Gibbs to house 6th grade.
 - ii. Mr. Flood spoke to the results on bar graph of individual teachers regarding their reasons for Gibbs 6th Grade as their first choice - most respondents made their decision based on the environment for teaching and learning. 6th grade building will allow for a tailored experience for 6th graders. Concerns about impact on specialist subjects, after school programs, and concerns about resources.
 - iii. What would help teachers to make the transition no matter what option is chosen? Highest response was to have teachers involved in the process. Given the results of the surveys they have demonstrated they really want to be part of the process.
 - iv. Mr. Flood said there has been an increase in students and a disproportional rise in the social/emotional needs of the students. The Gibbs plans would help to reduce that. The ability of teachers to work innovatively would help in a smaller environment. Silver lining in this challenge is to try something new and innovate for the students. Concerns about equity and SES divide with two 6/7/8 schools. While a 6th grade model will create an environment that is great for 6th students there is also a benefit for the 7th/8th grade teachers.
 - v. Assistant Principal Maureen Murphy spoke: Lot of support for the 6th grade model. Culture shock to come into the middle school from elementary school. Will help them to make that transition. Helps students to prepare for middle school and high school. Soft entry into the middle school. Fear of an us vs. them if we go back to two middle schools. Fear comparison of scores on standardized tests. That could be somewhat problematic.
- c. 8th Grade Teacher Judy Packer spoke to her 8th grade students they supported having one place to themselves just being in same place it would be easier to learn about each other and create a culture. They support the just 6th grade configurations. One building for just us. It would be easier to move to the OMS.
- d. Polly Ford, an OMS teacher and APS parent spoke to her 6th grade students. They are very happy but the building is very big. That was across the board. She favors having 6th graders at the Gibbs.
- e. Teacher Alecia Serafini, an OMS Art teacher and parent, said that the crowding at Ottoson makes her concerned about common spaces. The building just is not working with the current student population.
- f. David Schaye, a 7th grade special ed liaison at OMS and APS parent said communication around the school is already difficult. Very difficult to talk to the teachers that he needs to talk to. Already overwhelming. Going bigger is going to be an issue. His first reaction was 6/7/8 but then switched to just 6th grade. His colleagues helped him to see that the

issue of comparison would be difficult. We want to make a comfortable school for kids. The more comfortable the kids are, the more the faculty would be able to move together.

4. School Committee Members Questions and Answer discussion with District Leadership and OMS Staff
 - a. Paul Schlichtman said we take kids from very small neighborhood schools and then put them into the largest middle school in the state goes against which way we want to go in the best interest of the kids.
 - b. Judson Pierce asked for clarifications about how many faculty members participated in the survey. Mr. Flood said 77 people respondents - of approximately 90.
 - c. Mr. Hayner said that he favors a 6th, 7th, and 8th grade at Gibbs, though he appreciates many comments made about the 6th grade option. He said that it would be challenging to create an active parent community and PTO community because such communities do not happen in one year, but evolve over time.
 - d. Mr. Thielman distributed a set of questions raised by Dr. Kirsi Allison-Ampe. He said that some of the questions should be addressed by the Budget subcommittee, but others can be addressed in the course of the work the CIAA committee is doing.
5. The District Leadership, School Committee members, and OMS representatives completed most of the chart to evaluate the 6th grade v. 6th, 7th, 8th grade option at Gibbs. The group ran out of time to do the analysis between an OMS expansion and relocation to Gibbs.
6. Public Participation:
 - a. Jennifer Lockland, East Arlington parent and librarian at a school in Brookline that just has 7th and 8th graders. She said it is hard to create a school culture with just one grade. Also specialist (librarian) not able to develop skills over time. Very few of them so the perspective may have not come out in the survey since there are few of them. Feels that the three options (6th grade at Gibbs; 6th, 7th, and 8th grade at Gibbs; OMS expansion) are muddying people's minds. Smaller school experience would be the same if you have 3 grades at each school because you have less students in the same grade. Although split cluster is compelling concerns.
 - b. Lauren Ledger - two boys at Thompson. Has been working with parent groups. Would love her kids to be able to walk to the Gibbs. She has talked to friends in Needham, and is attracted to the 6th grade option. She said a lot of people in town are under the impression that the Gibbs will be an East Arlington 6/7/8/ and there might be issues if the option chosen was just grade 6 as parents might be fighting against that option.
 - c. Jennifer Litkowski, Thompson parent - Opening Gibbs in either configuration is great for me. He has also heard people from Western side of town are surprised with a town wide sixth. Understands strong option - what you are talking about moving my kids across town through bottle-necks. There are some hurdles.

- d. Parent of Thompson 4th Grader: Glad Gibbs option is being considered seriously. Expanding OMS is not a good option. Difficult for kids to navigate. Highly supports Gibbs in one form or another. All three options will cause increase in staffing. Understand staff wanting volunteers but would need hiring under any of the three options. OMS expansion may mean less increase in the operations budget.
 - e. Jennifer Davidson, Bishop parent – would the Bishop school be a buffer zone for the Gibbs? Would some students be separated from their friends? Really like the idea of a tailored experience for 6th grade. Be nice to have the same experience. Would there be improvements to the OMS after all the money is put into Gibbs?
 - f. Hardy parent appreciates the option into 6th grade thinking but there should be more research on unequal middle schools. Let's be really excited about whatever option there is. Limited conversation has been heard about what would be in the smaller middle school in East Arlington maybe we would give up some stuff to have that.
 - g. Another parent - 6th grade only is compelling, but the community feeling we got K - 5 would be lost if we put everybody into 6th. One middle school better than the other needs to be a parent and administration issue. Still leaning towards 6, 7, and 8 to keep community.
 - h. Jack Flood - all input is valuable. All the information that is from the perspective of the OMS will include new information that we get tonight to drill down into data on the 28th. Thank everybody for all the information people provided.
7. Timetable – Linda Hanson, AEA President, and others asked about the timetable for a decision on the middle school. Dr. Bodie provided the following information:
- a. School Committee and Superintendent have to submit a report to the School Enrollment Task Force by April 28th with an educational evaluation of expanding the Ottoson v. relocating students to the Gibbs.
 - b. Dr. Bodie suggested that the School Committee should vote on this issue at the April 14th meeting. She will draft a report for the Task Force that incorporates feedback from the faculty and staff at Ottoson as well as information from the CIAA work taking place.
 - c. The School Enrollment Task Force meets on April 28th with the School Committee (full), Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee to hear the report of HMFH on expanding OMS v. rehabbing Gibbs.
 - d. The School Enrollment Task Force votes on May 2nd on which option to endorse (Gibbs or Ottoson expansion)
 - e. The Long Range Planning Committee, which meets on April 13th, is tasked with putting together a draft question or questions for a debt exclusion.
 - f. The Board of Selectmen vote to put a Debt Exclusion question on the ballot. It's not clear if that will happen in the spring of 2016 or fall of 2016.
 - g. Dr. Bodie and her staff are pricing modular classrooms for the Ottoson. They will be needed for the 2017-18 school year.

8. The meeting adjourned @ 7:45 p.m. The committee will meet next on Tuesday, April 5th at 5:30 p.m. The focus will be on answering questions about the impact of an expanded Ottoson.

DRAFT



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Review comparison chart information completed thus far

ATTACHMENTS:

| Type | File Name | Description |
|----------------------|---|------------------|
| ▢ Reference Material | Middle_School_Options_Chart_(Work_done_@_3.31.16_CIAA_Meeting)_(2).xlsx | Comparison Chart |

**Expanding Ottoson Middle School v. Moving 6th Graders to East Arlington
Educational Analysis of Each Option**

| Gibbs Middle School (6th Grade or 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade school) | Factor |
|--|---|
| | <u>ASSUMPTIONS</u> |
| 500 | Building Capacity |
| | |
| | <u>COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS</u> |
| | Traffic |
| | Walkability |
| | School Culture |
| | |
| | <u>TEACHING AND LEARNING FACTORS</u> |
| | Cluster Model |

| | |
|--|---|
| | World Language Options (currently Spanish, French, Mandarin and Latin) |
| | Technology/Engineering |
| | Digital Modeling Lab |
| | Family and Consumer Science |
| | Opportunity to bypass 6th grade Math and enroll in 7th grade Math |
| | ACE |
| | |
| | <u>INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS</u> |
| | Ability of teachers to meet with colleagues in other grades |
| | Grade Level Meetings |
| | Subject Level Meetings |

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| | Full Staff Meetings |
| | Availability of Specialists and Need to Travel |
| | Other considerations |
| | |
| | <u>SPECIAL EDUCATION</u> |
| | What is the impact on Special Education Services? (OMS Expansion v. Gibbs 6th Grade Option) |
| | What is the impact on Special Education Services? (OMS Expansion v. Gibbs East Arlington Middle School, with (6th, 7th, 8th Graders) |
| | |
| | <u>IMPACT ON REMAINING STUDENTS AT OMS</u> |
| | School Culture |
| | Academic Impact |

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|--|---|
| | Extracurricular Programming |
| | |
| | <u>EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS</u> |
| | After School Programming (i.e., Robotics, Math Team, National History Day Competition) |
| | After School Program |
| | Chorus |
| | Instrumental Program |
| | Middle School Play |
| | |
| | <u>SCHOOL CULTURE AND MANAGEMENT</u> |
| | Which option creates the best overall culture for teaching and learning for Arlington Middle Schoolers? |

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| | Which option presents the best teacher/administrator to student ratios? |
| | |
| | OVERALL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT |
| | Which option is most likely to best prepare students for the next level of their education? Why? |

6th, 7th and 8th Graders to Gibbs

Ottoson Expansion

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1,400

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**Middle School Programming: All Town 6th Grade @ v. an East Arlington Middle School
Pros and Cons of Each Option**

| 6th Grade at Gibbs | Factor |
|--|--|
| | <u>ASSUMPTIONS</u> |
| 500 | Building Capacity |
| 500 | 6th Grade Capacity |
| 494 | Rising 6th Graders District Wide (Projected 10-year average) |
| | |
| | <u>COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS</u> |
| Ask TAC study. TAC will need to know about staffing and drop-off. Would need 1 or two buses. Not necessarily an additive bus as 6th graders also get | Traffic |
| Only 6th graders in E. Arlington would be walking 2/7. | Walkability |
| Teachers at OMS feel that this is the model that best supports school culture that supports learning. This model would provide a "polishing up" year. Concerns | School Culture |
| | Equity for all middle school students |
| | <u>TEACHING AND LEARNING FACTORS</u> |

| | |
|---|---|
| 16 classrooms - 4 clusters | Cluster Model |
| probably only be able to have two languages. would need to have additional FTE and one person would have to be dual certified. When they move to OMS | World Language Options (currently Spanish, French, Mandarin and Latin) |
| 6th grade curriculum is able to be moved easily. | Technology/Engineering |
| Easy to move to Gibbs | Digital Modeling Lab |
| Easy to move to Gibbs | Family and Consumer Science |
| WOuld have a small math class. | Opportunity to bypass 6th grade Math and enroll in 7th grade Math |
| Would be hard to have in th 6th grade, but you could do part time. | ACE |
| Teachers felt this best model. | Most conducive to teaching and learning and meeting social/emotional needs |
| | <u>INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS</u> |
| Tailored experience. Common planning time. School more accessible to parents to provide supports. Department meeting would be difficult have to travel. | Abilty of teachers to meet with colleagues in other grades |
| Easier to have all in same grade. | Grade Level Meetings |

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|--|---|
| Would have to travel. | Subject Level Meetings |
| Would happen the same. | Building Meetings |
| Probably have some people split - but less split. | Availability of Specialists and Need to Travel |
| Class sizes would be relatively what they are now. | Class sizes |
| Same. | Core spaces |
| Classroom teachers own their classroom. | Room ownership |
| | <u>SPECIAL EDUCATION</u> |
| With grade 6 only co-taught easier. | What is the impact on Special Education Services under full inclusion model. |
| Would keep those programs at OMS. Challenge would be how those SLC students would be in full inclusion if there is no 6th grade teachers. | SLC models |
| All 7th and 8th Graders | <u>IMPACT ON REMAINING STUDENTS</u> <u>AT OMS</u> |
| Having smaller grade span is going to help with anxiety. | School Culture |

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| | Academic Impact |
| | Extracurricular Programming |
| | |
| | <u>EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS</u> |
| CHallenging no matter which way. Could have more programming for themselves. AM/PM programming would be okay. | After School Programming (i.e., Robotics, Math Team, National History Day Competition) |
| Since mostly 6th grade students would remain the same. | After School Program |
| Would have to go with 6th grade | Chorus |
| It depends on the break-out of the students. Could have 6th grade band and orchestra, Would probably have more staffing. | Instrumental Program |
| Could have both. | Middle School Play |
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| | <u>SCHOOL CULTURE AND MANAGEMENT</u> |

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| The teachers at OMS believe this is the best model to support overall learning and school culture. | Which option creates the best overall culture for teaching and learning for Arlington Middle Schoolers? |
| One administrator would be able to deal with one grade. | Which option presents the best teacher/administrator to student ratios? |
| | |
| | OVERALL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT |
| This model may well prepare students to be more successful at OMS 7/8 grade. | Which option is most likely to best prepare students for the next level of their education? Why? |

| School (Grades 6th, 7th, and 8th) @ Gibbs |
|--|
| 6th, 7th, 8th @ Gibbs (East Middle School) |
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| |
| 500 |
| 166 |
| 494 |
| |
| |
| Ask for TAC study. More walkers if 6/7/8 as most students will be local. May mean more traffic supervisors for walkers. Would eliminate need for bussing. TAC will need to know about staffing and |
| 6/7/8 would be mostly walkers. |
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1 sixth grade cluster, 1 sixth/seventh cluster, 1 seventh/eighth, 1 eighth cluster - 4 cluster. 7th grade would not have a unique cluster.

Probably could still have 2 languages, maybe 3 at the Gibbs, but at OMS you probably could offer 4 languages. Would have to make an educational decision whether to have inequity or cut back on

One person would have to teach all three levels.
Equipment would have to be duplicated.

Would have to duplicate labs at both schools

This would be a major curriculum upheaval to have all of what is necessary to duplicate would be alot.

Could be done but scheduling could be done.

Would either have to hire someone else - not a full FTE or not offer at Gibbs.

Staff needed to be divided between schools

Only able to meet with the subset of the grades.
Common planning time okay. But meetings with department would be difficult.

Would have to travel.

Would have to travel.

Would happen the same.

More split with multi-grades

Depends on how you would district.

Same.

Classroom teachers own their own classroom.

Having co-taught classrooms challenging.

Each program is currently 6 - 7 - 8. We would keep that program at OMS. See A34 for issues.

Approximately 900 6th, 7th and 8th graders

Would have similar problems to what you have now.

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| Challenging no matter which way. AM/PM might be difficult to have at two schools. |
| Difficult to run two smaller program.s |
| Would have to break it up, chorus is more flexible. |
| Then you might have to travel, by school, more personnel. |
| Could have both. |
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| The teachers at OMS believe this would be a less desirable model. |
| One administrator would have to deal with multiple grades and developmental stages. |
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| |
| This model may have negative effects for 8th grade students going from class of 166 to class of over 400. |